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RUEHXD/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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C O R R E C T E D   C O P Y   (DOWNGRADED CLASSIFICATION)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: N/A

TAGS: PREL PGOV RS GG

SUBJECT: MFA HANDS OVER PACKAGE DOCUMENTING GEORGIAN

ACTIONS IN SOUTH OSSETIA

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: On August 27, Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin passed to the Ambassador a package of photos and a video documentary meant to document Georgian aggression in South Ossetia. The documentary argued that Georgians intended to kill the South Ossetian people and destroy their cities, while Russia was only a peacekeeper who fought valiantly to protect the South Ossetians. The video contained several allegations of U.S. involvement in the conflict, and asserted that Georgia had been preparing to attack South Ossetia since June 2008. Direct quotes from the documentary related to Georgia's intent and the destruction of South Ossetia are provided in paragraphs 6-7. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) On August 27, Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin passed to the Ambassador a package of materials meant to illustrate Georgian aggression in South Ossetia. The package consisted of 40 photos from state-funded ITAR-TASS and a 25-minute documentary video by the pro-Kremlin NTV television station dubbed in English. The photos primarily consisted of distraught mothers and children, hospital staff administering care, people returning to destroyed buildings, and deceased individuals in coffins.

¶3. (SBU) The focus of the documentary was to convince the viewer about the intent of the Georgian side to kill or harm South Ossetians and bring about the physical destruction of South Ossetia. It made the argument that Georgia started the conflict and intentionally used BM-21 multiple-launch "GRAD" rockets to kill innocent South Ossetians. It portrayed Russia as only a peacekeeper whose troops fought valiantly to protect South Ossetians and alleged that Georgia and the West launched an information war against the South Ossetians and Russians. The footage used in the documentary mainly consisted of rocket-fire at night, destroyed buildings, brief interviews with Tskhinvali residents, and crying families.

U.S. Involvement in the Georgian Operation

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¶4. (SBU) The documentary also argued that the West, and specifically the U.S., assisted the Georgian military. To this end, the documentary included an interview with Russian nationalist Alexander Dugin who said that the Georgians used American military tactics. It showed a Russian soldier

displaying a confiscated green plastic bag with English text that he referred to as "American writing." Furthermore, the video showed a South Ossetian official saying that his troops "had found items from among the Georgian troops that belonged to Americans."

#### Georgian Intent

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¶ 15. (SBU) The video also included a brief interview of a "captured Georgian commando" with a burned face who spoke only a few words, but off-camera the Russian translator spoke for a minute, saying that the commando knew about the attack on Tskhinvali since August 3. As further evidence of Georgia's well-prepared plans, the documentary said that the FSB had discovered a Georgian spy network. It showed footage of the June 11, 2008 arrest of Russian Alexander Kachirov, who said that Georgian intelligence services paid him U.S. dollars to take video of the positions of Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia.

¶ 16. (SBU) To show that Georgia intended to destroy South Ossetia's people and towns, the documentary includes the following direct quotes:

--"The night of August 7 Georgian President Saakashvili claimed he was ready for negotiations, but at 11:30 that evening, Georgia opened fire on Tskhinvali with GRAD rockets from the Georgian towns of Nikozi and Ergeti. GRAD rockets can hardly be called a method to establish order, it was just an execution of the city of several thousand people."

--"On August 8, Georgian tanks wiped out 10 South Ossetian villages from the face of the earth and entered Tskhinvali, systematically killing peaceful residents only because they were Ossetians. Georgians fired at residential buildings on their way into the city. They used GRAD rockets and then machine-gunned houses. They also knew people were hiding in

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basements, so they threw grenades into the basements. The Georgians attacked ambulances and destroyed the hospital. They fired at people who decided to leave by car, fired at young boys and old women."

--"Georgia said that the South Ossetians fired first because it had to establish the constitutional order to suppress the provocation. Russian peacekeepers were in the way so Georgian troops killed them. All laws worldwide prohibit shooting at peacekeepers; it is a war crime."

--"The name of the Georgian mission in South Ossetia was "Clear Field." The Russian military captured documents and maps that prove the Georgians had a well-prepared plan. It is now clear what the purpose was of NATO and the U.S. arming Georgia."

#### South Ossetia Destruction

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¶ 17. (SBU) The following are direct quotes made during the documentary meant to show the destruction of South Ossetia and its people:

--"Tskhinvali residents fled to their basements, men fought with Kalishnikovs but were no match for Georgian artillery fire. There was no electricity or water, food was scarce for South Ossetians."

--"On August 8, Russians entered to stop the extermination of South Ossetia. All Ossetians knew they would be slaughtered without Russia's assistance. Investigators are now collecting evidence of genocide."

--Interview of a crying Tskhinvali man: "This was an extermination of a peaceful people, he (Saakashvili) crushed

a family with tanks. Bloodsucker! Such barbarity never existed among human beings."

--Interview with woman: "Georgian troops jumped out of tanks and threw grenades into basements because they knew people were hiding there. A Georgian tank crushed a fleeing woman and her grandsons."

--The documentary ends with a tearful woman crying, "We will rebuild our city but we will never revive our boys," and the commentator saying that in the future the Ossetians will hold a blood revenge against Saakashvili according to the tradition of people in the Caucasus.

BEYRLE